



Unity Care Group Solano County Housing Proposal

Organization Overview and Capacity

Unity Care Group is a Black-led, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1993 with the mission to “Transform the lives of young people in and emerging from foster care by providing stable housing, caring connections, and life skills that build a foundation to achieve their potential.” With headquarters in San Jose, Unity Care provides services for youth and their families throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and in the Sacramento Metropolitan Area. We operate a continuum of housing for youth in Santa Clara, Alameda, Placer, Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties. Unity Care also recently operated a project for homeless adults in Solano County.

Since its inception, Unity Care’s role has been: 1) To deliver direct services that make a positive impact on underserved and vulnerable foster and former foster youth in California, and 2) to advocate for communities of color, lead in efforts to reduce inequities, and effect systems and policy change.

As a strengths-based, family-focused, culturally proficient agency, Unity Care’s goals include empowering youth to achieve self-sufficiency and overall wellness through housing, educational, employment, social, mental health, and other crucial supports. Unity Care’s over two dozen housing, community-based, and behavioral health programs are designed to help the most vulnerable youth succeed in becoming independent. Services for youth include transitional housing coupled with supportive case management; mental health treatment; independent living skills programs; and academic, vocational, and post-secondary navigational supports.

Agency Leadership: Unity Care’s multicultural executive leadership team has operational expertise across the five core competencies that drive the agency’s high impact programming: Program Development and Innovation, Communications, Fiscal Management, Staff Development, and Compliance and Quality Assurance. CEO Andre Chapman founded Unity Care Group with the goal of developing educational and social programs designed to enrich the lives of underserved youth. Mr. Chapman’s personal mission is to change the foster care system to ensure equality, transparency and access for underserved and marginalized communities of color. He oversees the seasoned, highly skilled leadership team consisting of Shailendra Baghel, MBA, CPA, JD, Director of Finance & Administration; Tatiana Colon Rivera, MPA, Director of Strategic Partnerships; Pam Carter, MA, Regional Director, NorCal; Kevin Sharps, MPA, Housing Director, Will Alexander, MFT, Regional Director, San Francisco; and Sanders Trent, MPA Regional Director, San Jose.

Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion: Unity Care has adopted policies relating to personnel, program, training, and community engagement to support its goal of being a culturally proficient agency. Unity Care started as a culturally-anchored organization

with a goal of providing services to culturally diverse youth and offering many culturally specific programs, going beyond simply adding cultural competency into its service delivery model. Therefore, Unity Care's core values of service, diversity, and equity drive agency programming and approach to service provision. To be an effective and efficient agent of change, Unity Care strives to mirror the populations served ethnically, racially, linguistically, and with respect to life experiences. This commitment starts with the board and leadership, and is incorporated across all departments. Our executive team is representative of the clients we serve: 90% are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) as are 50% of the Board of Directors. All current managers and supervisors are BIPOC. Additionally, a vast majority of Unity Care's line staff are bicultural and specialize in working with diverse communities of youth, such as LGBTQI+, Latinx, and African American individuals.

Diversity and inclusion are also regular topics of discussion at Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meetings. Our ELT focuses on how to improve the cultural proficiency of staff and the community, strategizing about ways Unity Care can continue to refine its diversity and inclusion practices and how it can be an agent of change in the community as a convener for challenging conversations that promote and enable diversity, understanding, acceptance, and inclusion.

Capacity to administer grants and contracts: To further illustrate Unity Care's qualifications to deliver the proposed services, the agency has 28 years of experience administering small, medium, and large city, county, state, federal, corporate, and foundation grants and contracts. Unity Care has developed robust management systems for finance and compliance, which together allow the agency to efficiently and accurately meet internal and external compliance and reporting requirements. Unity Care administers approximately 40 grants and service contracts per year from a diverse mix of funders with an annual operating budget of \$5 million. All current contracts are in good standing and clear of any open corrective action plans.

Agency target population: Unity Care Group's housing programs offer vulnerable foster and former foster youth who may also be engaged in the mental health and juvenile justice systems safe, secure, and affordable housing while they focus on their emotional, educational, and employment goals. Numerous studies have shown that foster and former foster youth face an unprecedented set of challenges, including high rates of homelessness upon transition from foster care, high unemployment rates, and low educational attainment. Foster youth are comprised disproportionately of children of color and are disproportionately at risk for juvenile justice system involvement as well.

The proposed project would focus primarily on former foster youth and young adults up to age 27. The majority of our clients are BIPOC; the current racial and ethnic breakdown of Unity Care clients is: 30% non-Hispanic White, 28% Hispanic, 20% African American, 0.5% Native American, 6% Asian, 0.5% Pacific Islander, 2% mixed race, 2% other, and 11% unreported.

With a multicultural team deeply sensitive to the cultural, identity, and community needs of every youth and family served, Unity Care is uniquely qualified to specialize in serving children of color and has particular expertise with African American and Latinx populations. The agency has a deep understanding of the impact of trauma and has integrated trauma-informed practices throughout its services and programs. Because Unity Care has significant experience within diverse, underserved, and marginalized communities, it is adept at identifying, and being responsive to, the specific culture and climate of each target population.

Continuum of Housing Programs: Our housing continuum designed to increase access to and readiness for affordable housing includes:

1. Transitional Housing Placement Program for Minors: *Target Population:* foster youth ages 16–17; *Services:* youth reside in Unity Care housing with live-in staff and receive weekly case management, mental health, and learning life skills to live independently.
2. Transitional Housing Placement Program for Non-Minor Dependents: *Target Population:* Current and former foster (including probation) youth ages 18–20; *Services:* Dependent on their independent living skills youth can either reside in Unity Care housing with live-in staff, independently in Unity Care housing, or at a site of their choice while receiving weekly case management, mental health, and progressive life skills training.
3. Transitional Housing Placement Program Plus: *Target Population:* Former foster youth, including probation youth, ages 18-24; *Services:* supports young adults to successfully transition into self-sufficient adulthood while living independently in Unity Care housing or a remote site of their choice.
4. Project Safe Haven: a coordination model where community-based service providers can partner with housing developers to leverage each other's funding to combine housing with intensive services and supports for youth. *Target Population:* current and former foster youth ages 18- 27. *Services:* Light touch case management and independent living support while living in partner affordable housing units.
5. Unity Place 1 and 2 Affordable Housing Units: *Target Population:* low income former foster youth with families; *Services:* 2 bedroom housing units in San Jose where tenants pay 30% of their income towards rent and live completely independently.

Proposed Project

The COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter protest of social injustices and the housing crisis in California have had an impact on every segment of our community, but none has been more affected than those youth and young adults aging out of the foster care system whose housing and financial situations are already precarious. The unprecedented housing crisis – compounded with reforms to California’s child welfare system – is leaving many youth and young adults with few options of finding safe, stable places to call “home”. According to a recent report by the Action Institute, foster youth have been and continue to be the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

Many youth who exit foster care have no resources and nowhere to go, resulting in nearly immediate homelessness. Data published by the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF), by age 21, *at least 26% of young people who age out of foster care in the U.S. experienced a period or more of homelessness*. Forty percent of foster youth who reach age maturity find themselves homeless within 2 years of aging out of the system. Unity Care has made it its mission to successfully serve these youth since its inception, empowering them to achieve self-sufficiency.

For the proposed project, Unity Care will fund the start up of a new transitional living home in Solano County designed to serve low-income youth up to age 27 transitioning out of foster care who are homeless or at risk for homelessness. This will include purchasing and furnishing a home which has already been identified and would be available for immediate service. In addition, we are requesting funds for case management.

Unity Care will leverage its decades of expertise in delivering successful housing and supportive services for youth and young adults to help them overcome the seemingly overwhelming barriers to their success and achieve positive outcomes. This will include delivering client-centered, evidence-based, culturally sensitive programming and services every step of the way to support youth in achieving self-sufficiency through customized services based on assessed needs.

Number of youth and young adults to be served and length of services: Unity Care will serve up to 5-10 young adults at a time in the Solano County-based home for up to 5 years.

Program model: The proposed project will exist along our continuum of housing for youth. In line with our Project Safe Haven model, Unity Care's comprehensive assessment process ensures that youth are placed in housing according to the following tiers:

Tier 1: This track provides the highest level of placement within the housing continuum. Youth demonstrate a solid foundation for independence and are moving towards career and/or educational goals. They typically demonstrate the ability to independently utilize various independent living skills, evidenced by a Casey score of 4-5. Mental Health functioning is typically stable with minimal to mild symptoms, which are evidenced by a GAF score above 71.

- **Housing Options:** Apartments with housing vouchers, Shared Housing, Unity Place Affordable Housing. The youth have the capability and functioning to live independently and follow through with the program requirements with minimal support.
- **Services Provided:** Case Management occurs approximately (1) time per month. Therapy is available as needed to support the youth with personal growth, life goals, and transition.

Tier 2: Youth that demonstrate moderate daily living functioning and/or mental health symptoms are most appropriate for Track 2. The youth will likely have personal goals, however, may struggle at times with taking steps to reach these goals. The Casey score will typically range from 3-4 and the GAF score will typically range from 51-60. The youth may need additional support with learning and/or practicing independent living skills or require additional mental health support.

- **Housing Options:** Shared housing; Unity Care Housing Continuum options may include shared apartments.
- **Services Provided:** Case Management occurs once per week, based on individual needs. Therapy is recommended to address and monitor mental health needs and transition to independent living.

Tier 3: Youth that demonstrate impaired functioning in one or more life areas are most suitable for this track. They may demonstrate delay in educational goals. Youth may have few independent living skills, evidenced by a Casey score of below 3, or serious mental health symptoms evidenced by a GAF below 50. **This tier will not be available for this project.**

Evaluating resident progress: Unity Care supports its clients' journeys towards self-sufficiency by ensuring that every youth and young adult served has identified and accomplished goals within each of our Five Pillars to Success (FPS) Philosophy. FPS defines key areas that are fundamental to improving the self-sufficiency and overall well-being of program participants, and consist of: housing, employment, education, well-being, and caring connections.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting

Unity Care has developed the processes, systems, and infrastructure to collect and evaluate program data. Unity Care's data evaluation team comprises a wide range of individuals at all levels of the agency including an Impact and Outcomes Analyst (IOA), the Evaluation and Learning Staff Committee (consisting of Case Managers, Resident Advisors, and Management Representatives), the Evaluation and Learning Board of Directors Committee (comprised of 3 Board Members, 3 community members, and 3 agency directors) to oversee agency-wide learning and represent evaluation and learning interests at the Board level. Committees meet monthly to discuss data learning, challenges, and data implementation strategies.

Led by the IOA and evaluation and learning committees, Unity Care conducts regular and ongoing tracking, data analysis, reporting and evaluation of the effectiveness of program services and a quantifiable analysis of successful outcomes for youth involved. The agency utilizes AWARDS (an electronic health record system) to collect data, track service activity efforts, and participant outcomes and Microsoft Power BI to generate visual data insights that can be easily understood by all stakeholders (e.g., staff, clients, board members, funders). With the support of the IOA, the Program Manager will ensure tracking and reporting compliance by generating reports in AWARDS to verify that the Unity Care team is completing the required tasks. The documentation in AWARDS includes recorded efforts and other documentation necessary to monitor and

evaluate the quality, quantity, and timeliness of service activities. Power BI data insights are updated weekly and staff at all levels are given access to their personal data insights to evaluate their own performance and progress towards meeting agency and client goals.

Direct service staff will document and track participant engagement, successes and steps taken toward goal achievement in the form of case notes. AWARDS is used to aggregate client and service information from intake to discharge, including participant demographics, intake and assessment information, clinical documentation, case plans, programmatic outputs and client outcomes, services provided, and billing information. We will have the capacity to generate reports for the county as needed.

Budget

Unity Care proposes using the requested funds to cover start-up costs in developing a transitional housing program for Solano County youth exiting foster care. Funds would cover purchasing, furnishing, and staffing a home for one year. The budget breakdown is as follows:

Year One

Line Item	Costs Year One	Funding Source	Costs Year Two	Funding Source
Personnel				
1.0 FTE Program Supervisor/ Case Manager	\$75,000	Solano County	\$78,700	Solano County HSS (THPP), County Housing Authorities, UCG Fundraising
.25 FTE Program Director	\$25,000	Solano County	\$26,250	Solano County HSS (THPP), County Housing Authorities, UCG Fundraising
Benefits at 25%	\$25,000	Solano County	\$26,238	Solano County HSS (THPP), County Housing Authorities, UCG Fundraising
Subtotal Personnel	\$125,000	Solano County	\$131,176	
Purchase of the	\$1,500,000	Solano County		

home/apartments that can house 5-10 youth (including closing costs)				
Furnishing home	\$50,000	Solano County		
Home Maintenance	\$25,000	Solano County	\$26,000	Solano County HSS (THPP), County Housing Authorities, UCG Fundraising
Total Program Costs for 1 year	\$1,700,000	Solano County	Year 2 operational cost \$157,176	Solano County HSS (THPP), County Housing Authorities, UCG Fundraising